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Modernization and integrated management of United Nations libraries: new strategic directions

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

United Nations libraries are making a coordinated effort to ensure that their activities and services are fully supporting the Organization's current goals and objectives. Technology and organizational change have provided opportunities for United Nations libraries to move from independent repositories to take up a new role as a network of knowledge-sharing communities: from collections to connections, moving from building and maintaining book and periodical collections to facilitating a knowledge-enabled environment and the exchange of information among stakeholders.

United Nations libraries are redeveloping their products and services, physical spaces, staff skills and working relationships with their colleagues within the Organization to offer timely and relevant support to their growing constituencies. They are also redeploying and renewing the skill sets of their staff to meet the needs of this challenging new work environment. The libraries will be in the forefront of the use of information technology to meet the increasing demand for reliable information resources that support global problem-solving. The new model will help clients select the most useful, relevant and authoritative information they need, when they need it. Increasingly, United Nations libraries will emphasize personalized service and direct support to constituents by knowledge consultants and advisers, resulting in more effective use of information.

While retaining important traditional library functions and services, including selective paper-based collections, United Nations libraries will be better equipped to meet the information needs of their diverse clientele in today's continually changing and challenging information environment, an environment in which knowledge workers are challenged by the information overload caused by the ever-increasing number and complexity of issues.

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United Nations libraries are using innovative approaches, tools and skills to promote the relevance and value of the rich resources they steward. They are becoming networking facilitators, essential team members in the United Nations community of knowledge workers.

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 59/126 B, the General Assembly welcomed the progress reported by the Secretary-General in his report on the modernization and integrated management of United Nations libraries and in-depth review of library activities (see A/AC.198/2004/4), took note of paragraph 50 of resolution 58/270, in which it had requested the Secretary-General to conduct, through the Office of Internal Oversight Services, a review of the operation and management of United Nations libraries, with a view to assessing staffing requirements for those libraries in the light of technological advances in the delivery of information services, to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session and to transmit that report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-seventh session. In September 2004, the Office of Internal Oversight Services, in its report to the General Assembly (A/59/373, para. 38), recommended that in order to ensure sustained and effective collaboration among the libraries, the Steering Committee for the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations Libraries (henceforth the Steering Committee) should develop and propose a new United Nations library policy for approval by the Assembly. The new policy should address, inter alia, the future role of the United Nations libraries in the light of advanced technologies, including the Internet, and seek to clarify the mandate of the Steering Committee and its funding sources.

2. The present report, submitted pursuant to resolution 59/126 B, defines strategic directions for the libraries that serve the United Nations Secretariat, its bodies, Member States and its broader constituency. Led by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in New York and the Library at the United Nations Office at Geneva, with contributions from the other United Nations libraries, the present report provides a picture of how United Nations libraries are transforming themselves in order to participate in today's global community, in which information and knowledge are crucial to decision-making. Additional information on library activities, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 59/126 B, is provided in the report of the Secretary-General on the continuing reorientation of the Department of Public Information (A/AC.198/2005/2).

3. This report discusses the United Nations libraries that are members of the Steering Committee (see annex). There are, in addition, libraries in other programmes and hundreds of small and field libraries embedded in United Nations offices, including the United Nations information centres, in more than 100 countries. It is anticipated that many of the changes outlined in this report will affect all of the libraries that serve the United Nations community.

II. Libraries in the United Nations environment

4. The United Nations library community has a broad membership that includes the libraries of the United Nations system and depository libraries. Since 1946, in order to ensure universal access to essential information in the field of peace and security, human rights, economic and social development, humanitarian affairs and international law, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library has coordinated the distribution of United Nations documents and publications to users around the world through its depository library network of more than 400 libraries in over 140 countries. Each library in this network maintains a collection of United Nations materials that starts

from the date of designation as a depository library. Using these collections, the general public can consult United Nations documents and publications free of charge.

5. United Nations libraries play a role similar to that of national libraries in that they are responsible for preserving and maintaining access to all the materials published by the Organization at all duty stations, as directed by the mandate of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library:

> "The Library's primary function is to enable the delegations, Secretariat and other official groups of the Organization to obtain, with the greatest possible speed, convenience and economy, the library materials and information needed in the execution of their duties. The materials to be assembled and the services to be maintained will be determined by the needs of these groups" (A/C.5/298, para. 4).

6. Until the 1980s, physical distances and the time required to transmit documentation, meant that United Nations libraries operated to some degree in isolation. In addition, because there was no easy way of sharing resources, each library duplicated some of the collections and activities of the others. Obtaining current information was often a problem since, on top of the amount of time required to ship materials to the libraries of the system, cataloguing had to be recreated in each location. Library staff skills, and consequently quality of service, varied widely between locations, depending on the level of professional and technical training available. While other support services, such as financial management and human resources, standardized their services across geographical boundaries, United Nations libraries did not take the same direction. There was, nevertheless, a recognition of the role of the libraries as a useful support service.

7. In the 1990s, as desktop computers and information and communication technologies (ICT) became available at United Nations offices throughout the world, staff in all areas of the Secretariat began to take advantage of e-mail and the Internet to exchange documents and access current information. Software made it possible for staff to work more independently. By the mid-1990s, most United Nations staff members working from offices were comfortable with personal computers as a basic working tool and with ICT as tools of information-sharing.

8. Many libraries, however, were left behind in the process of adopting newer, more personalized technologies, having invested heavily in the large-scale and complex library management systems previously used in libraries in many countries. These "legacy systems" effectively kept the libraries' computing activities focused on their catalogues, which in turn kept library staff occupied in the processing aspects of library work. Meanwhile, more flexible web-based technologies were providing users with rapid access to information without the need for extensive training or a thorough understanding of technical systems.

9. Working together, the United Nations libraries maximized the impact of the time invested in these substantial systems by bringing out a bibliographic database for United Nations documentation produced by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the Library of the United Nations Office at Geneva. This database was initially maintained on a mainframe computer application shared between New York and Geneva, which was subsequently migrated to locally maintained integrated library management systems. Libraries of the regional commissions and other offices were

invited to join in the shared indexing network and produce bibliographic records for United Nations documents produced at their respective duty stations. In addition, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library coordinated the creation and maintenance of the United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS) Thesaurus for all United Nations libraries, thereby providing a common controlled vocabulary for the description of United Nations documentation and externally acquired library materials. The multilingual thesaurus was a landmark achievement in the electronic publishing of United Nations information, permitting the retrieval of official United Nations documents by topic in all six official languages of the Organization on the Official Document System (ODS).

10. The work to produce these valuable tools was, however, like many other efforts of the library system, invisible to users and staff members outside the walls of the libraries, which found themselves, at the start of the new millennium, facing a world that was beginning to question their function and the nature of their work. The explosion of information, and the dramatically increased expectations of computer-literate users on one side of the digital divide and a larger, needier, community of users on the other side gave United Nations libraries pause: were they still working in an effective way? A series of reviews that looked at the activities of the United Nations libraries conducted between 2000 and 2004 identified management issues and made recommendations.

11. While much attention in these reviews was focused on the largest library in the network, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, it was recognized that the time had come to look at the work of all United Nations libraries and at the way they worked together. In its resolution 58/101 B, the General Assembly welcomed the establishment of the Steering Committee as a measure to improve the provision of library services. Chaired by the Department of Public Information, and working through coordinated management and collaborative policy-making, the Steering Committee was established to facilitate interdependence and foster initiatives to create a dynamic, synergistic and fully functional network of library services throughout the Organization.

12. Over time, the work of the Steering Committee, tasked with guiding and overseeing the production of a new policy for United Nations libraries, will be enhanced by the strengthened network of the United Nations library community.

III. New directions for United Nations libraries

A. From collections to connections

13. Libraries add value to individual publications and documents by analysing, organizing and making them available in their collections. As the nature of United Nations library collections changes in the face of technological advances, the potential of value added by the library will also increase, providing the opportunity for new, more relevant services.

14. United Nations documents will remain at the core of the collections of United Nations libraries and more attention and resources will be devoted not just to preserving these materials but to making them accessible and available. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library will focus staff resources on accessibility of the unique

United Nations documents collections to ensure that their unique content is put to best use.

15. The increased availability of information resources through the Internet and of books through efficient online vendors has allowed United Nations libraries to re-evaluate their collections policy. Researchers and users are visiting the library less, tending to make do with materials freely available on the web. The libraries will work with changing technologies to produce electronic collections of external materials on demand through the use of systems that provide access to multiple types of information resources held in different locations. Print collections will not disappear, although they will be smaller and more focused.

16. Providing centralized access to costly journals has always been an important function of United Nations libraries. The number of journals that can be accessed by the libraries in electronic, rather than print, format has grown by more than 50 per cent during the past 10 years. The libraries have made groundbreaking progress in joint procurement of these costly resources by using the United Nations System Electronic Information Acquisition Consortium to negotiate subscriptions at a lower cost to the Organization. In the coming years, vendors of electronic journals and news sources will be developing systems to allow more direct on-demand delivery of their materials directly to individual users. United Nations libraries will redirect their specialized expertise in this area to helping users to deal with the multitude of choices and to select optimal delivery mechanisms, making use of built-in tracking mechanisms to analyse and evaluate the needs of their users. All these changes, facilitated by a higher level of resource-sharing, will reduce the costly duplication of acquisitions.

17. United Nations libraries will increasingly turn to electronic sources for new information products to summarize, filter and select relevant timely information for users. Web-based products that provide personalized alerts and summaries of current information, links to expertise, searching across institutional and workgroup resources and repackaging of United Nations information for various audiences will become the work of the library staff, who previously devoted much of their time to processing tasks. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library, for example, is launching a new, more accessible web-based service providing up-to-the-minute key information and commentary on official United Nations documents. The connectivity that ICT provides will allow rapid worldwide sharing of these products.

18. The greatest change in the work of United Nations libraries will be the realignment of their services towards operational priorities. The inward focus of traditional technical library work, so necessary before the advent of the World Wide Web and e-mail, is shifting to a model of service that constantly works outwardly on making connections for its users: connections between documents and functions, connections between people and documents and connections between people and people. The role of United Nations libraries as preservers and disseminators of cultural information will be enhanced and new services will support the Secretariat's creation of a knowledge-enabling environment in and among the United Nations library system.

19. The client groups of the United Nations library system are simultaneously faced with an overwhelming amount of information to manage and a rapidly changing work environment that involves the continuous introduction of new and isolating technologies, new networks and new colleagues. The libraries will work to

help staff and delegations deal with this increasingly complex environment through direct support services, which will be addressed at the actual location of the problem.

20. The needs of individual users and small teams will be met through the introduction of Personal Knowledge Management at the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. Personal Knowledge Management is an emerging discipline that will be used in discovering knowledge gaps, team training and individual coaching in the tools and techniques provided by the Organization. Because techniques and tools are constantly evolving, Personal Knowledge Management teams will work continuously with support service units in order to ensure that users have the most appropriate tools to meet their needs and that they know how to use them.

21. Through their training programmes, United Nations libraries have developed in-depth experience in building the capacity of their client groups in information retrieval techniques. They will build on this experience through developing user support and training tools that make practical sense of the numerous information sources and services available.

22. As the key disseminators of United Nations information, depository libraries have always played an essential role in the outreach strategy of the Organization. This role will now be reinforced. With United Nations documentation free of charge over the Internet through the Official Documents System, the role of depository libraries as local custodians of United Nations documentation will have to be re-examined. There will be a move towards providing these libraries with current information in electronic form, while maintaining access to print materials as long as they are needed.

23. Goal eight of the Millennium Development Goals calls for global access to the benefits of new technologies, especially ICT. As part of their contribution to bridging the digital divide and supporting education in developing countries, the United Nations libraries will work through the depository libraries to strengthen their support to users in the developing world. This work will concentrate on building awareness of United Nations materials and their relevance to local issues as well as on training and the development of tools and products to ensure that countries with poor connectivity and low bandwidth have access to up-to-date United Nations materials in the most accessible formats. In some developing countries, in particular those where public access to a United Nations information centre is limited or restricted, further collaboration or integration of reference services with depository libraries will be explored.

24. The buildings and the physical environment that have characterized United Nations libraries are being re-examined in the light of new ways of working. The physical structure of work spaces in United Nations libraries will be redesigned to better serve the larger, more flexible and interactive working environment. Walls will become less important as library staff interact more closely with users in their daily work. The updated look of many United Nations libraries will remind visitors of Internet cafes and modern bookstores, while behind the scenes, technological efficiency will make the most of communications, processing and storage technology.

25. More important than the redesigned building space will be the new collaborative space the United Nations libraries will occupy. The libraries will have

a presence across the Organization, both by providing "live" knowledge coaches and teams that will help people find and organize information in their offices and at their workstations and through the network of behind-the-scenes library workers who will prepare targeted information resources to support the work at hand. Libraries without walls will make the work of information professionals more visible.

26. Many library users now interact with United Nations libraries almost exclusively through the telephone or computer networks. Of those who visit the physical libraries of the system, many are staff on mission making use of the computer-based resources. Libraries still provide a welcome space for browsing, reflection and research, although fewer and fewer users, tied to their office workstations or constantly in meetings, feel that they have time for these activities so important to the creative process.

27. The traditional reference areas will be transformed into common spaces for learning, discussion and meetings. Point-of-problem assistance may be offered by moveable reference kiosks near conference and meeting areas, as well as by telephone and virtual reference help desk teams. Smaller, more intimate spaces will be created to encourage reading and contemplative work. The Reading Room will become the Knowledge Centre, a place for exchanging ideas and sharing information.

28. Paper-based collections for specific purposes will remain essential for United Nations libraries for some time. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the Library at the United Nations Office at Geneva are mandated to preserve complete archival collections of official documents. Paper collections are also to be maintained by the libraries of the other duty stations for the documentation produced locally. To ensure that growing hard copy collections of such materials are secured and kept in good condition for future generations, the adoption of modern, climate-controlled compact shelving, storage and retrieval systems in renovated stacks areas, free from threat of flood and fire, will be needed.

29. Paper-based collections of externally published books and periodicals will, however, be reduced if these materials become more readily available outside United Nations libraries. Stack space for these materials will be reclaimed for materials for which United Nations libraries have a unique responsibility, including materials produced in the field. Based on areas of specialization to be determined for each library, resource-sharing of collections of external materials among United Nations libraries will ensure access while freeing up additional stack space. As the focus on the development of collections moves towards managing the rich institutional memory of the United Nations, including what has been traditionally known as grey literature, new arrangements for secure electronic storage, backup and retention will be put in place, in partnership with information technology (IT) and archives bodies.

B. New capacities: information management skills for the twenty-first century

30. Building a learning organization requires that people share what they know. Staff of the United Nations libraries will build on the core competencies of traditional library work as well as those of the Organization, by strengthening their skills in communications, software performance measuring techniques,

interviewing, coaching and training, information systems design and electronic publishing. Working more intensively with users from all United Nations client groups, library staff will align their activities, services and outputs more closely with the goals, objectives and operational priorities of the Organization.

31. Delegates, the staff of Permanent Missions, Secretariat staff, media, non-governmental organizations and other representatives of civil society, as well as external researchers and the general public, are recognized as users of United Nations libraries. The libraries are now expanding their services to include people from these groups who have not previously used conventional library services. While not all constituents have access to the premises of United Nations libraries, all have access to their rich web sites. The libraries will customize their services and information products to ensure that the most relevant and appropriate information is delivered to their many constituents.

32. The staff of United Nations libraries has been moving away from the more traditional reactive, "wait until asked" model of reference service to a model that anticipates the operational directions and information resource requirements of the Organization. In addition to service orientation and an understanding of the needs and work habits of users, staff in the library system will build their capacity in communications, survey techniques and software performance analysis in order to apply better defined user requirements for information systems development. As a result, new electronic services will be more responsive to the needs of clients. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library is launching a service that delivers, directly to clients' desktops, selected and targeted information on people management, organizational learning and content management as well as other materials related to ICT.

33. The broad knowledge of information sources possessed by staff of the United Nations library system is one of its greatest assets. Work within the system has demanded a wide view of United Nations activities that is not easy to find elsewhere in the system. This prepares staff for an active role in the implementation of integrated enterprise resource management systems as a partner with IT staff. Familiarity with a wide range of information resource types, another basic of library work, will help staff give a broader view of possibilities at the knowledge discovery stage of organizational projects, as well as providing support to training and coaching activities.

34. The ability of library staff to analyse and evaluate information environments and sources will be enhanced to produce value-added products and services targeted to the needs of United Nations users. Increasingly, they will also combine this skill with their knowledge of web technologies to build capacity among users to better assess the quality of information sources used.

35. Summarizing document content is a core component of library work. The need for this skill in the face of the sheer quantity of useful information being presented to the United Nations is growing rapidly. United Nations staff needs assistance both in gaining the skills to produce briefer, more succinct and to-the-point materials and in obtaining access to extracts, précis and executive summaries. Library staff will become a valuable source of assistance in this area.

36. As print collections shrink, libraries will act as advisers to departments on selecting and using new resources. The advisory capacity of United Nations libraries can add substantial value to information resources in the departments and divisions

of their organizations. At the same time, library staff is gaining new skills in digital preservation in order to ensure accountability and institutional memory.

37. Cataloguing, classification and indexing are technical skills that have long been recognized as a specialization of librarians and information professionals. Library staff can now apply these skills to information architecture, web-site design, taxonomy development, metadata management and corporate data quality both for specialized and cross-organizational information and content management systems.

38. Since the explosion of information in electronic form, substantial library resources have been devoted to ensuring that the authoritative content of documents is captured, tracked and preserved. Library staff will continue to build on their knowledge of the latest legal and technological developments in the area of digital rights and electronic records management to continue to ensure delivery of accurate, reliable and trustworthy information.

39. Library work requires substantial imagination and ingenuity in the use and adaptation of resources. These qualities are now needed within the United Nations library system in order to deal with the complexities of a continuously changing information environment and a working environment characterized by shrinking resources and a strong demand for client satisfaction. Innovative thinking and flexibility will be required qualities for successful performance on the job.

40. United Nations library staff will move towards a more interactive role, acting as a catalyst in and across its organizations. Putting their networking skills to work in new areas, staff in field libraries will identify the need for and facilitate the holding of electronic forums and other methods of using web-based technologies for sharing knowledge on specific development issues.

41. Libraries recognize the need for ongoing learning. The nature of library work exposes staff to a constant stream of new experience, including constantly evolving disciplines and terminology, which demand adaptation and adjustment. Challenges faced by the United Nations in the new information-based world make it necessary for library staff to take a more active role in preparing to meet change. The role of library staff as empathetic coaches, trainers and contributors to systems development will require continual upgrading of skills to meet the needs of library users. Investing in library-based human capital will become an essential budgetary priority of the Organization.

C. New partnerships

42. This programme of change within United Nations libraries will be carried out through the collaboration between the libraries and the constituencies they serve. In a networked world, the libraries are nodes in an interdependent system. Library staff cannot be expected, even with the provision of continuous learning, to develop all the skills needed to create knowledge-enabled environments. New partnerships among their client groups will use team work to tap into sources of expertise and capacity from both the United Nations library system and the user constituencies to solve problems and create resources in a way that has never been possible before. Bodies that provide common services and perform integrated functions across departments and work groups will become major partners of United Nations libraries.

43. Information technology managers are crucial to the running of United Nations libraries. If IT is to meet its promise of improving the effectiveness and quality of work, the management of electronic content cannot be separated from the management of electronic tools. The thorough understanding of content and how people use it possessed by the staff of the United Nations library system complements the expertise of IT departments: this is a natural partnership.

44. Library managers have been bringing their understanding of information sources and the organization of information and knowledge to IT projects since the introduction of computer-based library management systems in the 1960s. The knowledge accumulated while working on detailed requirements with systems analysts, developers and programmers, combined with a high level of technological experience that ranges from the implementation of database systems to the development of library web sites, makes the United Nations library system a valuable partner in broader systems development and implementation.

45. Information architecture, content quality and usability are priority areas for improving information systems for users and are areas of intensive collaboration between United Nations libraries and IT departments. In return, the libraries need IT departments to contribute their user support knowledge and skills to coaching and training activities. IT departments can also contribute their awareness of new technological tools to support the knowledge-building efforts of individuals and teams. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library, for example, cooperated with the Information Technology Services Division in the implementation of the new United Nations Intranet, iSeek. While the Division provides instruction to webmasters on the new system, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library conducts training sessions for staff. Feedback and suggestions for improving iSeek made by trainees are communicated to the Division.

46. Consultative and collaborative structures for this partnership already exist in the form of the task team for United Nations-wide taxonomy standards, a sub-group of the Enterprise Content Management Board, which reports to the Information and Communications Technology Board. This is a good beginning, but needs to be transformed into a full working partnership on enterprise content management issues affecting all United Nations organizations.

D. Organizational learning

47. Coping with the changing workplace and the need for the constant upgrading of skills is a difficult but essential task. Following the strategy of United Nations human resources departments, United Nations libraries can help address these issues through: leading knowledge management initiatives, coaching and training programmes, running workshops, interviewing, and applying knowledge assessment techniques. In return, human resources departments will be able to collaborate with the libraries by informing knowledge teams of training activities and the procurement of new management and technical training opportunities.

48. Corporate communications and public relations work is increasingly web-based. United Nations libraries will participate in the process of ensuring that awareness and understanding of United Nations policies becomes a reality through assisting with appropriate Intranet organization and content. Communications specialists, in turn, can assist in exposing library-based products and services.

49. Records management methods and techniques are becoming highly relevant in this age of huge quantities of data and information. United Nations libraries, re-focusing their mandate on materials produced by and about the United Nations, will seek an active partnership with records and archives staff to help ensure better preservation of the Organization's institutional memory. The libraries will work in partnership with records and archives staff in the development and implementation of content management strategies and personal knowledge management programmes.

E. Field operations

50. With the expanded mandate of the United Nations in the area of peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance over the past decade, United Nations staff has been called upon to serve in mission operations for which a complete infrastructure, including information management support, has to be set up.

51. The communications and public information components in peacekeeping missions are established to convey to the general public what the United Nations is doing, and why, and to promote the role of the mission. These components are public, rather than staff-oriented.

52. United Nations library staff has participated in peacekeeping missions, working with mission staff to supply relevant information in the field. The example of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) has proven that there is a growing need for immediate access to public information in all peacekeeping missions.

53. In the coming years, library staff will be called upon to use their professional knowledge and expertise to service field operations, finding, organizing and storing relevant information and analysing, evaluating, creating and disseminating it in electronic format within the mission, as well as customizing it to the needs of the users. Desktop delivery of all essential information will facilitate the effective decision-making process in field operations.

IV. Meeting the challenge

54. Identifying and understanding the changes that United Nations libraries need to make in order to meet the knowledge sharing and information management demands of the new working environment is the first step in transforming the skills, methods and knowledge bases of the United Nations libraries into a powerful resource for the Organization in the twenty-first century. To realize this vision, resources will be needed in two main areas, training and technology, and a careful evaluation of information policy issues and staffing procedures will be an essential part of the planning process.

55. Building on the base of existing skills of information professionals, library staff will need to upgrade their skills in the areas of writing for electronic publishing, making presentations, interviewing, facilitation and public relations in order to better explain their work and to participate more effectively in the networked world. Library staff will need training in up-to-date coaching and training techniques in order to work more effectively with users and participate in

United Nations learning programmes. Training in teamwork skills will be a priority. An investment in staff training in technological developments will be required on a regular basis. This should focus on information architecture, web design, content management systems and computer networking and storage systems.

56. United Nations libraries must stay at the forefront of the field of information technology if they are to meet the demand for reliable common information services. This is especially true for support to the field and in closing the information gap between the developed and developing world. United Nations libraries will need to continue to invest considerable resources in the planning, acquisition and management of technological facilities.

57. Implementing these new directions will ensure that United Nations libraries align their policy with the recommendations contained in the 2002 report of the Secretary-General, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387).

58. Working in a complex political environment, United Nations libraries help their clients focus on United Nations priorities through providing access to the records of what the Organization has pledged to do. United Nations libraries offer steady, unbiased points of reference and access to essential context.

59. The deceptively simple statement that the United Nations needs to produce fewer, shorter reports that are richer in content directs attention to an area of expertise held in United Nations libraries. By making relevant information more accessible, United Nations libraries provide writers with more time to focus on creating good content. United Nations libraries will work in the broader content of knowledge management programmes to help United Nations staff create clearer and more concise documents.

60. United Nations libraries have rich experience in the coordination and integration of policies and methodologies and implementation of joint programmes in spite of geographical distance and organizational boundaries. Examples of this are the reorganization of the Sergio Vieira de Mello Library in Nairobi, which serves three United Nations organizations, and the Library at the United Nations Office at Geneva, which provides integrated library management to other United Nations libraries in Geneva as well as to the United Nations libraries in Vienna. United Nations libraries will continue to work from their own established networks to apply this experience in assisting sharing of knowledge among regions, regional and headquarters bodies and United Nations staff members at Headquarters.

V. Conclusions

61. The United Nations needs the transforming power of its libraries more than ever in its history. Faced with the challenges of globalization, growing political conflict, the spread of disease and hunger and the ever-widening gap between rich and poor, the need to put information and knowledge to work in solving global problems has never been more pressing. The combined experience, understanding and institutional memory embodied in the United Nations libraries and their staff has the potential to contribute significantly to this effort.

62. The mandate for the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, set out in 1949 by the General Assembly has stood the test of time. The new model of United Nations libraries will continue to fulfil this mandate using innovative approaches, tools and skills.

63. United Nations libraries will continue to serve as rich sources of knowledge for the world. Paper and other physical media repositories will remain, while new methods of custodianship and preservation will release library staff from much of the physical care of the collections to devote more skill to discovering and promoting their relevance and value. The aim of this refocus is to raise the profile of the United Nations libraries, making them visible as a networked community of facilitators and their staff perceived as essential team members in the United Nations community of knowledge workers.

Annex

United Nations libraries participating in the Steering Committee for the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations libraries

United Nations libraries represented on the Steering Committee for the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations libraries include 10 separate institutions:

Dag Hammarskjöld Library at the United Nations Headquarters in New York

Library at the United Nations Office at Geneva

United Nations libraries at Vienna, which serve the United Nations Office at Vienna, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Sergio Vieira de Mello library at Nairobi, which includes the libraries of the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, and the United Nations Information Service

The libraries of the following regional commissions:

Economic Commission for Africa

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

And the libraries of:

United Nations University

International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda